



State of Connecticut

SENATOR JOHN MCKINNEY

SENATE MINORITY LEADER

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September 12, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

This winter Connecticut residents will be struggling with some of the highest prices for energy in the nation. Heating oil will be approaching \$5.00 per gallon and natural gas and electricity costs will be above last year's levels as well. Many of Connecticut's citizens have reached a breaking point. The record number of people with electric and natural gas bills who have fallen behind on their payments indicates that people can no longer afford to pay these increases and are being forced to make impossible decisions.

The Connecticut General Assembly recognized that our citizens were facing the possibility of freezing this winter and acted in special legislative session to substantially increase the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) which is largely funded with federal LIHEAP dollars. The CEAP program provides low income and vulnerable households protection during the winter season. The Connecticut Legislature has committed to spend \$113.9 million on heating assistance.

Connecticut expects to receive \$41 million in LIHEAP funding. Our legislative committees on Appropriations, Energy and Technology, and Human Resources have already determined that this will be inadequate to pay for benefits we have guaranteed, and that we will need an additional \$36.3 million from the federal government to fully fund energy assistance programs. Without full funding Connecticut may be forced to close the entire program, or portions of the program, early.

Congress and the Administration have failed to act on legislation that would provide a sizeable increase in LIHEAP funding. It is critical to the citizens of Connecticut that Congress act on bills currently before them.

We are calling on you to immediately bring up for consideration legislation such as H.R. 6427, the Warm Winter and Cool Summer Act, co-sponsored by Congressman Peter Welch and Congressman Christopher Shays, which has bipartisan support.

Madam Speaker, the looming crisis facing Connecticut and other states is simply too important to be held up by partisan gridlock. We need our leaders to move beyond the politics that has thus far prevented LIHEAP funding from being increased and distributed to our citizens in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John McKinney".

John McKinney
Senate Minority Leader

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Len Fasano".

Len Fasano
Senate Minority Leader Pro Tempore

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert D. Russo".

Robert D. Russo
State Senator